

Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SPOP, IV

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING
GLOBAL PROBLEMS -- PROPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD
PRODUCTION

REF: (A) STATE 107370; (B) STATE 200393;
(C) 77 ABIDJAN 8034; (D) ABIDJAN 1752

1. THE IVORY COAST HAS HAD ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THE LESS DEVELOPED
WORLD. ALTHOUGH THE GREATER EMPHASIS HAS BEEN ON EXPORT
CROPS, THE IVORY COAST HAS MADE A SIGNIFICANT EFFORT TO
INCREASE SUBSISTENCE CROP RPODUCTION. UNFORTUNATELY,
THE SUCCESS OF THE SUBSISTENCE CROP PROJECTS (UNLIKE
EXPORT CROPS) HAS BEEN MIXED. AS A RESULT, THERE
HAVE BEEN OCCASIONAL FOOD SHORTAGES IN THE IVORY COAST,
SUCH AS THE RICE SHORTAGE OF 1977. NEVERTHELESS,
THROUGH LOCAL PRODUCTION AND IMPORTS (PRINCIPALLY OF RICE,
WHEAT, MEAT AND FISH), BASIC FOODSTUFFS ARE GENERALLY
AVAILABLE AND HUNGER IS NOT PREVALENT HERE.

2. DUE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE IVORY COAST'S DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM AND THE OPENING UP OF LARGE NEW AREAS TO PRODUC-
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TION (PARTICULARLY IN THE SOUTHWEST) THE DEMAND FOR LABOR
HAS INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY IN RECENT YEARS. THERE HAS
BEEN SO MUCH MIGRATION INTO THE IVORY COAST THAT IT IS
ESTIMATED THAT ONE FOURTH OF THE POPULATION WAS BORN OUT-
SIDE THE COUNTRY. IN SPITE OF THE RAPID INCREASE IN
POPULATION (3.8 PERCENT A YEAR), THERE ARE STILL SEASONAL
SHORTAGES OF LABOR IN AGRICULTURE AND LARGE AREAS OF THE

COUNTRY SUITABLE FOR EXPLOITATION ARE STILL THINLY POPULATED. UNEMPLOYMENT IS LOW BY LDC STANDARDS.

3. RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, THE GOIC'S OFFICIAL POSITION IS THAT THE IVORY COAST IS STILL UNDERPOPULATED AND MUST INCREASE THE BIRTH RATE (REFS C AND D). THIS POSITION IS NOT RIGID; CONTRACEPTIVES ARE IMPORTED BY A GOVERNMENT WHOLESALER ALTHOUGH THEIR USE IS NOT WIDESPREAD. BIRTH RATES ARE DROPPING IN URBAN AREAS.

4. USG OFFICIALS HAVE DISCUSSED POPULATION MATTERS WITH THE GOIC, THE MOST NOTABLE RECENT EXAMPLE BEING COORDINATOR FOR POPULATION AFFAIRS MARSHALL GREEN'S MEETING WITH THE MINISTER FOR WOMEN AFFAIRS (REF C). WE WILL CONTINUE TO RAISE OUR INTEREST IN POPULATION/FOOD PROBLEMS WITH SENIOR GOIC OFFICIALS AS APPROPRIATE OCCASIONS PRESENT THEMSELVES. HOWEVER, SINCE THE U.S. DOES NOT AVE A BILATERAL AID PROGRAM IN THE IVORY COAST, WE MUST BE MORE CAREFUL IN HOW WE PRESENT OUR VIEWS HERE THAN IN COUNTRIES WHERE WE ARE MAKING A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

FRIEDMAN

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